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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: 100 DAYS OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused May 2-4 news coverage on the upgraded international alert on the H1N1 flu outbreak and the Taiwan government's anti-epidemic plan; on developments in cross-Straits relations; and on the May 1 report released by Freedom House which shows that Taiwan has dropped 11 spots in its press freedom ranking. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the 100 days of the Obama Administration. The article said that U.S. President Barack Obama's unique democratic cultivation and his move to discuss "values" have gradually recovered the United States' international position and generated a new world order. End summary.

"Moving from Hard Democracy to Soft Democracy"

Professor Lii Ding-tzann of National Tsing-hua University's Institute of Sociology, opined in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 130,000] (5/4):

"U.S. President Barack Obama has assumed office for 100 days now. Even though he is still battling bravely against economic problems, he and his unique democratic cultivation are silently changing the United States' relations with the rest of the world. The eight-year term of office of President George W. Bush has not only turned world economics upside down but also led the United States to isolation, severely damaging its hegemony status. But within just 100 days, Obama has gradually recovered the United States' position in the international community and thereby generated a new world order. Some people said it was because of his personal charisma, but more precisely, it should be his unique cultivation of soft democracy. ...

"Obama's charisma, in addition to his [attempt to] fulfill soft democracy, should also be attributed to the fact that he brought up the discussion of 'values,' such as global non-proliferation and the slowing down of global warming, in the international community, which is well-known for power confrontation. He showed us a vision and a way [out of the predicament] in the reality of the international situation. ... Via soft democracy, Obama listens, shows respect, and engages in dialogue and cooperation; [what he does shows that] there is possibility that these values will be fulfilled. ..."

YOUNG